United States, which means that we received some of the highest doses of radiation.

Montana is home to 15 of the 25 counties with the highest radiation dosage nationwide and the county receiving the highest dose in the country is Meagher County, MT.

Individuals who were affected from this nuclear testing are often called downwinders—because the wind carried the poisonous Iodine-131 north, when the gravity finally kicked in and it settled to the ground. People can be exposed to radiation from nuclear testing fallout through external radiation like a plume or a cloud passing over a region. They can also be exposed by radioactivity deposited on the ground and remaining there for long periods of time, or by the internal exposure to radioactivity that accumulates in the body from inhalation or ingestion of plants, meat or milk. Milk is the primary source of Iodine-131 and disproportionately affects milk drinkers. Who drinks milk? Children and babies who are the most vulnerable of our society.

This discussion leads us to the topic of thyroid cancer. The thyroid gland will absorb about 30 percent of radioactive Iodine-131 in the human body. Thyroid cancer is slow in development as it takes 10 to 40 years to manifest itself. This means that radiation exposure in the late 1950s might not manifest as cancer until the 1990s.

This chart compares the rates of thyroid cancer nationwide and in my state of Montana. Between years 1989 and 2003, the rate of thyroid cancer diagnosis nationwide increased by 38 percent. At the same time, the thyroid cancer rate in my State of Montana increased by a whopping 127 percent.

The 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and RECA Amendments of 2000 offer lump-sum payments of $50,000 to civilians who were living in States deemed as downwind from the nuclear testing in Nevada and who contracted a specific type of cancer. States where downwinders can currently receive compensation include Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. It is important to note that Montana was not included under this law. Yet a report just released by the National Academy of Sciences shows that Montana received the highest radiation dosage.

Accordingly, a most recent study on this issue shows the absorbed radiation dose to the thyroid of a person born in 1948 who resided for the entire period in Montana is 250 milligrays. This dosage is higher than most, if not all, regions presently eligible for compensation under RECA.

My bill, S. 977, would allow Montanans who were adversely affected by this nuclear testing to be counted among those folks currently eligible to receive $50,000 in compensation. Those eligible for $50,000 would also receive compensation in the form of free medical treatments for the diseases they have contracted from the exposure.

The fact is, Montanans were involuntarily subjected to increased risk of injury and disease in order to serve the national security interests of the United States, and they deserve our compassion and our support.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support S. 977, to expand RECA to victims in the State of Montana.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Montana for doing something about this problem. It is a huge problem. He has identified it. He has some solutions, he has some ideas, and we will work with him, as I am sure other Senators will in States also affected by this problem. I compliment him for raising the issue and finding a solution.

ADLER PLANETARIUM'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Thursday, May 12, 2005, the Adler Planetarium, the first planetarium in America and in the Western Hemisphere, will mark its 75th anniversary.

Max Adler recognized a need to exhibit artifacts from the history of astronomy to the public, and so he founded the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum in 1930. Originally, it housed a collection of about 500 astronomical, navigational, and mathematical instruments that would become the foundation for Alder's History of Astronomy Collection. Today, this collection has grown to almost 2000 astronomical artifacts dating from the 12th to the 20th centuries. Included in this collection is the world's oldest known window sundial from 1529; a telescope made by William Herschel, the astronomer who discovered Uranus; and a collection of rare books comprising more than 2000 volumes, some of which were printed before the 1500s.

Over the past 75 years, the Adler's history has been marked by several milestones. In 1933, light from the star Arcturus was successfully converted into electrical signals that turned on the lights for the opening ceremonies of the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition. In 1964, the Adler Planetarium partnered with the National Science Foundation and began offering the Astro-Science Workshop, a program designed to challenge Chicago area high school students who demonstrate an exceptional aptitude for science.

In 1999, the Adler Planetarium underwent renovations that produced the Sky Pavilion, a 60,000 square-foot glass-enclosed addition that includes five new exhibit galleries and a café overlooking the lakefront and the Chicago skyline. The highlight of this renovation is the StarRider Theater, which, through the use of state-of-the-art computer projection technologies and a sophisticated audience participation system, creates a 3–D virtual reality experience for all those who visit.

Earlier this year, the Adler Planetarium was selected by NASA as the education partner for the Interstellar Boundary Explorer mission to be launched in 2008. This mission will examine the characteristics of the region of space between the solar system and deep space where the solar wind protects Earth and the rest of the solar system from cosmic radiation.

I know that my colleagues join me in congratulating the Adler Planetarium on this important day. I hope all who are involved with the Planetarium will take pride in their important work as they celebrate this anniversary, and I wish them continued success in the years to come.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS ROBERT W. MURRAY JR.

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from Westfield. Robert Murray, 21 years old, died on April 29 when a bomb exploded beside his vehicle during a reconnaissance mission in Tal Afar. With his entire life before him, Robert risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

After graduating from Westfield High School in 2002, Robert attended Indiana State University where he studied aviation management. He was a licensed pilot and a musician who decided to join the Army because of family history and a sense of patriotism and duty after the tragic events of 9/11. Friends and colleagues remember him as a determined and well-liked individual with a good sense of humor. His mother Katrina Murray released a statement praising her son's heroism, saying, ''From an early age, Robert wanted to enter the military. This was the path he chose, and I want to honor his choice by remembering him as a hero who served his country proudly and made the ultimate sacrifice. He will be missed by our entire family and his many friends. He brought so much joy and laughter.'' I stand here today to express the same sentiments of pride in this young Hoosier and gratitude for his sacrifices and for those made by the Murray family on behalf of our country.

Robert was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, based in Fort Carson, CO. This brave young soldier leaves behind his father Robert W. Murray Sr. his mother Katrina and his two sisters.

Today, I join Robert's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Robert, a memory that will burn